

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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R 011105Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1359

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7066

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJECT: INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: THE GOP CONTINUES TO EXPRESS WHAT WE TAKE TO BE GENUINE CONCERN THAT MRS. GANDHI MAY EVENTUALLY ORDER A MILITARY MOVE AGAINST PAKISTAN TO BOLSTER HER POSITION. MFA OFFICIALS FEAR THAT SUCH A MOVE COULD COME ONCE THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S DOMESTIC MEASURES TO DEAL WITH INDIA'S PROBLEMS HAVE PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL. GOP FEAR OF AN EVENTUAL GOI STRIKE IN AZAD KASHMIR IS LIKELY TO REMAIN AN INIORTANT ELEMENT IN GOP THINKING ABOUT INDO-PAK RELATIONS UNTIL A STABLE POLITICAL SITUATION IS RESTORED IN INDIA, A PROSPECT THE PAKS WOULD WELCOME.

THE GOP MEANWHILE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A CAREFUL PUBLIC POSTURE TOWARD INDIAN DEVELOPMENTS. GOP OFFICIALS REPORT LITTLE MOVEMENT IN THE AREA OF MORE IMMEDIATE INDO-PAK RELATIONSHIPS. THE PROLONGED
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ABSENCE FROM PAKISTAN OF MANY OF THE LEADING MFA

PLAYERS IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS AND A FEELING HERE THAT THE INDIANS ARE IN ANY EVENT TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC CONCERNS BOTH SEEM TO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN THIS LULL IN ACTIVITY. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, OF ANY LESSENING IN THE GOP COMMITMENT TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. THE PAKS SAY THEY WOULD LIKE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH ANOTHER ROUND OF CIVIL AIR TALKS AND MAY BE WRITING TO THE INDIANS TO CALL FOR A SESSION.
END SUMMARY.

1. FIVE WEEKS AFTER THE PROCLAMATION OF THE INDIAN STATE ON EMERGENCY, CONCERN ABOUT EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF GOI "FOREIGN ADVENTURE" APPEARS TO REMAIN IN FOREFRONT OF GOP THINKING ABOUT INDO-PAK RELATIONS. IT IS A FREQUENT THEME AT MFA, WHERE FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI HAS SPENT HOURS PROJECTING SCENARIOS FOR SUCH AN INDIAN MOVE IN SEPARATE OFF-THE-RECORD SESSIONS WITH INDIA-EXPELLED BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS

PETER HAZELHURST (TIMES) AND PETER GILL (TELEGRAPH). SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN HAVE BEEN VOICED TO US AND OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS HERE BY MFA OFFICIALS AT VARIOUS LEVELS. THESE APPREHENSIONS APPEAR GENUINELY FELT.

2. THE STANDARD MFA FORMULATION DOES NOT POSIT THE DANGER OF A NEARTERM INDIAN ATTACK. IT HAS IT THAT PRIME MINISTER GANDHI WILL FIRST SEEK TO MAINTAIN HER HOLD ON POWER BY PUSHING ECONOMIC AND GOVERNMENT REFORM. THESE EFFORTS WILL ALMOST INEVITABLY FAIL GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEMS INDIA CONFRONTS AND MRS. GANDHI'S DEPENDENCE ON VESTED INTERESTS FOR SUPPORT. IT IS AFTER THIS FAILURE BECOMES EVIDENT -- SO THE PAK ARGUMENT GOES-- THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER A MOVE AGAINST PAKISTAN, PERHAPS A BORDER "DUSTUP" IN AZAD KASHMIR BUT POSSIBLY A MORE EXTENSIVE OPERATION THERE. SHE HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED, THE PAKS ALLEGE, THAT SHE WILL GO TO ANY LENGTH TO RETAIN OFFICE, AND IF SHE IS PERSUADED THAT AN ATTACK ON PAKISTAN IS NECESSARY FOR THIS SHE WILL ORDER ONE.
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THE INDIAN MILITARY WILL COMPLY. THE SOVIETS, WITH ALL THEIR CHIPS ON MRS. GANDHI AND LITTLE PROSPECT OF AS ACCEPTABLE A SUCCESSOR, WILL NOT OBJECT.

3. IN DISCUSSING THEIR APPREHENSIONS, MFA OFFICIALS STOP WELL SHORT OF STATING THAT THIS GRIM SCENARIO WILL NECESSARILY UNFOLD. THE STRESS THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT HAPPEN, AND DECLARE THAT PRUDENCE DEMANDS

THAT THEY BE ON THE ALERT. THEY ADMIT THAT TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF ANY PRELIMINARY INDIAN MOVES IN THE DIRECTION THEY FEAR. AT THE SAME TIME, THEIR FORMULATION IS MORE THAN A WORST CASE ANALYSIS, AND THE FEAR OF AN EVENTUAL GOI STRIKE IS LIKELY TO REMAIN AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN GOP THINKING⁴ ABOUT INDO-PAK RELATIONS UNTIL A STABLE POLITICAL SITUATION IS RESTORED IN INDIA.

4. THE GOP WOULD CLEARLY WELCOME SUCH RESTORED STABILITY. WHATEVER PRIVATE REGRETS SOME PAK OFFICIALS MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THE BREAKDOWN OF THE INDIAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, THE EVENTS OF THE PAST MONTH SEEM TO HAVE RE-

INFORCED THE EARLIER GOP BELIEF THAT IT IS IN INDIAN STABILITY THAT THE MOST PROMISING PROSPECTS FOR PAK SECURITY LIE. WHAT THE GOP WOULD MOST PREFER IS FOR MRS. GANDHI TO RESTORE SUCH STABILITY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCCESSFUL DOMESTIC MEASURES. BUT IT IS NOT AT ALL SURE THAT SHE WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO.

5. THE GOP MEANWHILE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A CAREFUL PUBLIC POSTURE TOWARD INDIAN DEVELOPMENTS AND GOP OFFICIALS HAVE SAID NOTHING AT ALL PUBLICLY ABOUT THEM SINCE THE EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED. (THE FOREIGN JOURNALISTS RECENTLY EXPELLED FROM INDIA ARE SEEKING INTERVIEWS WITH BHUTTO. THEY SENSE THAT THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE GIVEN THE OBVIOUS SENSITIVITY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES). ALTHOUGH THE PRESS HAS STEPPED UP ITS EDITORIAL COMMENT ON INDIA, PRESUMABLY WITHOUT GOP OBJECTION, AND HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF MRS. GANDHI, IT HAS CONTINUED TO DESIST FROM AN DISCUSSION OF THE IMPACT OF INDIAN EVENTS ON PAKISTAN.
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6. WHILE EXPRESSING PRIVATE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT EVENTUAL INDIAN MILITARY MOVES AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC SILENCE ABOUT RECENT INDIAN DEVELOPMENTS, GOP OFFICIALS REPORT LITTLE MOVEMENT IN THE AREA OF MORE IMMEDIATE

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1360

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7066

INDO-PAK RELATIONSHIPS. THE ONLY RECENT ADVANCE HAS BEEN THE CONCLUSION IN ISLAMABAD OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PLANT PROTECTION ADVISERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES ON MEASURES TO CONTROL LOCUST BREEDING. (AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ISSUED JULY 30 HERE SAID THE ADVISERS AGREED THAT LOCUST OFFICERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES SHOULD MEET PERIODICALLY ON THE BORDERS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RANGERS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON THE LATEST LOCUST SITUATION PREVAILING IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN AND SHOULD MAINTAIN STRICT SURVEILLANCE OF LOCUST BREEDING AREAS TO PREVENT FURTHER PLAQUES.) THE PROLONGED ABSENCE FROM PAKISTAN OF MANY OF THE LEADING MFA PLAYERS IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS AND A FEELING HERE THAT THE INDIANS WILL IN ANY EVENT BE TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC CONCERNS TO INTEREST THEMSELVES IN ANY SIGNIFICANT FURTHER MOVES IN THE SIMLA PROCESS BOTH SEEM TO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN THIS LULL IN ACTIVITY. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, OF ANY LESSENING IN THE GOP COMMITMENT TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

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7. WHETHER THIS LULL WILL END SOON IS UNCLEAR. IN A DISCUSSION OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS JULY 30, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDE TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT THE GOP WISHED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE

STALLED CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS BUT HAD HAD NO REPLY
TO BHUTTO'S STATEMENT OF JUNE 15 CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE
RESUMPTION OF TALKS. WHEN THE POL COUNSELOR OBSERVED
THAT THIS CALL HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN A BROADSIDE LARGELY
DEVOTED TO A CONDEMNATION OF MRS. GANDHI (ISLAMABAD
5484 AND 5542), MEHDI VOLUNTEERED THAT IT MIGHT BE
ADVISABLE NOW TO GO AHEAD WITH A LETTER TO THE INDIANS
REQUESTING THAT TALKS BE HELD. MEHDI RECALLED THAT
IT HAD BEEN THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE TWO SIDES
AT THE FOREIGN SECRETARIES' NEW DELHI SESSION IN MAY
THAT A THIRD ROUND WOULD BE HELD IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS
AND HE SAID THE PAKS VERY MUCH WANTED TO MEET THE
INDIANS AGAIN. HE GAVE NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, THAT
THE GOP WOULD BE PREPARED TO MODIFY THE POSITION IT
TOOK IN THE MAY DISCUSSIONS, NOR DID HE MADE ANY
REFERENCE TO THE MESSAGES INDIAN MEA OFFICIAL ASHOK
CHIB TOLD THE EMBASSY NEW DELHI ADCM THE PAK INDUS
WATERS COMMISSIONER HAD BEEN RELAYING BETWEEN THE TWO
CAPITALS (NEW DELHI 10098, RECEIVED HERE LATER), AN
AGHA SHAHI INITIATIVE TAKEN IN HIS ABSENCE FROM
PAKISTAN.
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